

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) (03-15-2015)		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Victory in Counterinsurgency: Adaptation and Innovation				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Major Francisco Xavier Zavala USMC Paper Advisor (if Any): LtCol Patrick Gallogly				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited. Reference: DOD Directive 5230.24					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT Small wars are not a problem of the past. The selective engagement in small wars will continue to be a decision for U.S. national leaders, but the protection of U.S. interests around the world will eventually result in limited conflicts. The U.S. must accept their eventuality and continue to prepare for the counterinsurgencies that will accompany low intensity conflicts. Arguably, the American public is tired. Political leaders want to avoid new conflicts post Iraq and Afghanistan that could result in costly, non-decisive wars. The Department of Defense (DoD) is shifting priorities away from limited regional wars by preparing for security conflicts with potential regional hegemony that could challenge American geo-political interests. These conditions create an environment in which the most serious lessons from America's recent counterinsurgencies are neglected, improperly remembered, or worst of all, not harnessed to develop innovative strategies for the future. Victory in counterinsurgency will require innovation that utilizes past failures as a catalyst for adaptation in order to properly identify the center of gravity and balance the operational factors in response to emerging security challenges.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Counterinsurgency, Small Wars					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 24	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

Victory in Counterinsurgency: Adaptation and Innovation

by

Major Francisco Xavier Zavala

U.S. Marine Corps

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

15 May 2015

Contents Page

Introduction	1
Why Closing Our Eyes Won't Work: Insurgencies Will Not Go Away	2
Buzzwords, Critical Thinking, and Identifying the Correct Center of Gravity	3
A Consideration for Innovation and Adaptation: the Operational Factor Time	8
A Consideration for Innovation and Adaptation: the Operational Factor Space	10
A Consideration for Innovation and Adaptation: the Operational Factor Force	12
Alternate Perspectives: Counter-arguments to Consider	14
Rebuttal, Conclusions, and Recommendations	15
Notes	18
Selected Bibliography	20

Paper Abstract

Small wars are not a problem of the past. The selective engagement in small wars will continue to be a decision for U.S. national leaders, but the protection of U.S. interests around the world will eventually result in limited conflicts. The U.S. must accept their eventuality and continue to prepare for the counterinsurgencies that will accompany low intensity conflicts. Arguably, the American public is tired. Political leaders want to avoid new conflicts post Iraq and Afghanistan that could result in costly, non-decisive wars. The Department of Defense (DoD) is shifting priorities away from limited regional wars by preparing for security conflicts with potential regional hegemon that could challenge American geo-political interests. These conditions create an environment in which the most serious lessons from America's recent counterinsurgencies are neglected, improperly remembered, or worst of all, not harnessed to develop innovative strategies for the future. Victory in counterinsurgency will require innovation that utilizes past failures as a catalyst for adaptation in order to properly identify the center of gravity and balance the operational factors in response to emerging security challenges.

Introduction

Small wars are not a problem of the past. The fallacy that the United States will have the opportunity to choose its wars and "opt out" of inconvenient and costly counterinsurgencies must be contested.¹ The selective engagement in small wars will continue to be a decision for U.S. national leaders, but the protection of U.S. interests around the world will eventually result in limited conflicts. The U.S. must accept their eventuality and continue to prepare for the counterinsurgencies that will accompany low intensity conflicts. Arguably, the American public is tired. Political leaders want to avoid new conflicts post Iraq and Afghanistan that could result in costly, non-decisive wars. The Department of Defense (DoD) is shifting priorities away from limited regional wars by preparing for security conflicts with potential regional hegemony that could challenge American geo-political interests. These conditions create an environment in which the most serious lessons from America's recent counterinsurgencies are neglected, improperly remembered, or worst of all, not harnessed to develop innovative strategies for the future. Victory in counterinsurgency will require innovation that utilizes past failures as a catalyst for adaptation in order to properly identify the center of gravity and balance the operational factors in response to emerging security challenges.² First, the requirement for innovation will be discussed through an acknowledgement that counterinsurgencies cannot be ignored. Second, critical analysis and the consideration of alternate Centers of Gravity (COG) that defy commonly accepted slogans will be discussed. Finally, specific recommendations regarding each of the operational factors will be presented as considerations to assist operational level planners in the design of effective strategies.

Why Closing Our Eyes Won't Work: Insurgencies Will Not Go Away

Small wars are not the exception; they are the norm.³ Instead of trying to wish these challenges did not exist, the U.S. must embrace the requirement to dominate small wars due to their frequency and focus attention on how to rapidly achieve desired objectives at acceptable costs. Irregular wars have been fought with greater frequency than state-on-state wars.⁴ As they have in the past, irregular wars will continue to prevail as predicted by the National Intelligence Council's (NIC's) Global Trends 2030, which “finds that irregular and hybrid warfare will remain prominent features of the future threat environment. It states that ‘most intrastate conflict will be characterized by irregular warfare—terrorism, subversion, sabotage, insurgency, and criminal activities’ and that intrastate conflict will also be increasingly irregular, noting that ‘[d]istinctions between regular and irregular forms of warfare may fade as some state-based militaries adopt irregular tactics’.”⁵ The frequency of small wars and the challenge they will pose to U.S. interests demand an acknowledgement that these security challenges will continue to exist. More importantly, the U.S. must retain the DoD capabilities that compliment the diplomatic, information, and economic elements of national power in response to these security challenges. Military capabilities for victory in counterinsurgency must be included.

The United States’ attempts to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan without a decisive victory will be interpreted by adversaries as proof that technologically superior American forces can be challenged and defeated via irregular warfare. This perception, along with an evident collapse of American popular support for these wars, will result in the continued pursuit of objectives by insurgent groups. Despite a desire to avoid future small

wars, the need to defend American interests against insurgencies will continue to involve the U.S. in counterinsurgencies.

Global U.S. interests require the selective engagement of U.S. military forces around the world in defense of American interests. “The rise of irregular threats and constraints on resources pose an acute dilemma for U.S. strategy, increasing the imperative to remedy the deficiencies of the past 13 years. More than ever, the United States requires new approaches that can achieve satisfactory outcomes to multiple, simultaneous conflicts at acceptable cost.”⁶ Asymmetric warfare will either directly or indirectly challenge American interests globally, and the United States will have to engage or accept the consequences of non-engagement to include regional instability, loss of credibility with allies, and the exploitation by competitors of the power vacuum created by American selective engagement. It is for these reasons that the United States must retain its focus on small wars, apply the valuable lessons learned in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and continue to prepare for future counterinsurgencies. The focus must not be on how these recent conflicts could have been fought better, but rather on the planning considerations that must be applied to develop effective strategies that will result in sustainable political solutions to solve the next war at acceptable costs.

Buzzwords, Critical Thinking, and Identifying the Correct Center of Gravity

Buzzwords detract from critical analysis. It is time to challenge the commonly accepted conclusion that the “population” is the center of gravity in counterinsurgency. Critical analysis must prevail in defiance of hasty conclusions in order to properly identify the COG in upcoming counterinsurgencies.

Despite FM 3-24's recognition that every insurgency is a distinct problem set that requires a unique solution that is specific to the conflict, FM 3-24 fails to offer alternative centers of gravity beyond the population.⁷ More importantly, FM 3-24 fails to promote the critical analysis of the host nation government during the COG assessment. This has promoted the automatic conclusion that, "COIN should be oriented towards winning 'hearts and minds' through increased reliance on soft power."⁸ This flawed determination has failed to take into account the fundamental nature of the host nation government.

This failure must be used as an opportunity for adaptation and innovation enabling the comprehensive analysis that is needed to properly identify the COG. Planners must correctly determine if those in power genuinely desire to provide services to the population or if the "ruling elite have organized society for their own benefit at the expense of the vast mass of people" enriching themselves while the masses are impoverished.⁹ The proper identification of the COG will largely depend on the assessment of whether the government has obtained its legitimacy through consent or through "competitive control": the resigned consent of a coerced population that responds, "to a predictable, ordered, normative system that tells them exactly what they need to do, and not do, in order to be safe".¹⁰ This analysis is vital because it determines if the government is capable of serving as "the moral or physical strength" that can provide a favorable, sustainable political solution to the sources of instability that give root to the insurgency.¹¹ The U.S. military's effort to gain the sympathy of the population through soft power will fail to support a decisive victory if the host nation government fails to obtain its legitimacy from the population by prioritizing wealth for the governing as opposed to the governed.

Planners developing future counterinsurgency strategies must adapt during the design of new strategies utilizing the lessons of Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan as a catalyst for innovation. In each of these wars, where the population was identified as the center of gravity, tactical success did not translate into strategic victory. The subsequent emphasis on soft power that was intended to gain the sympathy of the population failed to produce a decisive sustainable political outcome. Rather, the outcomes were protracted conflicts in which the United States failed to achieve its original objectives while investing tremendous national resources in regional conflicts that failed to yield positive returns. Even when the trust of the population was secured at the tactical level, the population neither served as the COG “moral or physical force” that defeated the insurgencies in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan nor did it serve as the force that sustained a favorable political solution.

Counterinsurgencies are not a military problem. They are first and foremost a political one.¹² This statement is exemplified by the case study of how Costa Rica responded to the same economic shocks that enabled bloody insurgencies to take place in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala in the 1970s-1980’s. Costa Rica’s adaptive and political response to the sources of instability that resulted in Communist insurgencies across Latin America is notable for several reasons. First, Costa Rica responded via government reform and did not incorporate military power. Second, Costa Rica’s swift governmental adaptation resulted in an un-noticed victory that enabled a sustainable political outcome and national stability. This second observation is particularly noteworthy when Costa Rica’s victory is compared to the bloody, protracted insurgencies that destroyed Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. Third, in this case study, government was the center of gravity.

Political reform consisted of minimum wage increases, price regulation for basic foodstuffs, and the taxation of export products to enable the continued development of national infrastructure. The gradual elimination of the sources of instability generated the population's endorsement of the government.¹³ Costa Rica's response confirms the trends noted by Acemoglu and Robinson where governments that are able to provide and protect economic incentives for the population via the creation of institutions are able to establish a social contract that is characterized by consent as opposed to coercion. "Each society functions with a set of economic and political rules created and enforced by the state and the citizens collectively. Economic institutions shape economic incentives: the incentives to become educated, to save and invest, and to innovate and adopt new technologies. It is the political process that determines what economic institutions people live under, and it is the political institutions that determine how this process works."¹⁴ Costa Rica was the only country that rapidly adapted politically, provided effective government incentives, and retained the endorsement of the constituent population while avoiding the violent insurgencies that took place across Central America.¹⁵ The Costa Rica case demonstrates how effective government can serve as the COG and achieve a sustainable political solution at an acceptable cost through political reform and governance.

If military planners are tempted to discard the lessons of Costa Rica in the 1980's due to the lack of a military response, the case study of Colombia presents a helpful example in which legitimate governance was the COG and a military response supported the counterinsurgency strategy. Attempts to defeat the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were unsuccessful until the government almost collapsed in the 1990's.¹⁶ The imminent collapse of the government provided the necessary incentive for national

leaders to reform and develop a system of incentives through effective institutions. Through effective governance, the Colombian government was finally able to strengthen its relationships with the population and the military. The government directed the military to focus on establishing security in key economic sectors. Not only did the people benefit from trade, but also the military benefited because national taxation of commerce provided the financial means for the military to fund its forces.¹⁷

The Colombian case study is notable for several reasons. First, while it is still on going, it appears that the Colombian government will defeat the FARC and establish a sustainable political outcome. When ultimately threatened by collapse, the government's focus shifted to effective governance. From a U.S. military point of view, this case study presents a sharp contrast with the role of U.S. military forces in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The United States supported the Colombian government with military assistance that "was extended with a minimal footprint and, of course, without the involvement of U.S. military personnel in combat operations. The United States provided critical equipment, training, and logistical and intelligence support to the Colombian forces."¹⁸ Neither the DoS nor DoD took the lead from the Colombian government, nor did it alleviate the Colombian government of the threats that stimulated internal government reform and adaptation. The limited American military role ensured Colombian ownership of the problem as opposed to the mistaken American ownership of the problem. This is a critical lesson for future innovation. The incentive for survival was preserved, and it transformed the failing government into the COG capable of achieving victory over the FARC. Moreover, this case demonstrates an important contrast in the negative, non-intended consequences regarding the use of U.S. military forces. In Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan,

where U.S. forces were used as the primary instrument of power and directed to focus on the population as the center of gravity, the results have been either failed or non-decisive, protracted, and costly wars.

However, carelessly declaring government as the COG in future counterinsurgencies will not provide a panacea. Victory in counterinsurgencies will continue to require critical analysis that takes into account the nature of government and its potential to uphold a sustainable political solution to each conflict. This critical analysis and thorough determination of the COG must be used as the foundation upon which planners build a counterinsurgency strategy that balances the operational factors effectively.

A Consideration for Innovation and Adaptation: the Operational Factor Time

The 2012 “Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century Defense” directed that “U.S. forces ‘no longer be sized to conduct large-scale prolonged stability operations’.”¹⁹ The desire to avoid future protracted conflicts is the result of the harmful consequences and significant national costs the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have had across total U.S. interests. The desire for an expedient victory however will conflict with the 10-year duration of the average insurgency.²⁰ Planners will continue to be confronted by the challenge of creating a strategy that will result in a rapid decisive victory.

However, the factor “Time” can be influenced in order to expedite victory in counterinsurgency through operational art and strategy design. The U.S. supported counterinsurgency in El Salvador during the 1980’s reiterates the lessons and opportunities for adaptation that were identified in the previously mentioned Colombian case. The factor “Time” can be influenced through a strategy that does not remove the host-nation government’s ultimate incentive, which is to remain in power.

During the 1980's, the U.S. provided limited aid to the government of El Salvador as it fought against the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). U.S. aid was provided conditionally coercing the Salvadorian government to implement democratic reforms. Threatened by collapse, the Salvadorian government agreed to U.S. conditions and "democratized and increased its legitimacy, while the military increased its competence and improved its respect for human rights."²¹ While the counterinsurgency lasted 13 years, the U.S. approach of limited support and not shielding the Salvadorian government from the threats of regime change resulted in a favorable sustainable political outcome within an acceptable timeline and cost.

This example presents a sharp contrast with Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan where U.S. strategy safeguarded each government accidentally absolving it of its responsibility to rule legitimately. The strategies in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan contain a critical lesson found in the non-intended negative consequences of each conflict. In each of these three case studies, the United States committed significant military resources and took the primary role in seeking to achieve its objectives. The dominant role of U.S. forces and corresponding economic resources provided an un-intended incentive for corrupt opportunists who recognized that protracted conflict prolonged their access to American economic aid. In all three cases, the dominant role of U.S. power enabled corruption, gave an incentive to corrupt host nation leaders to protract the conflict, while U.S. forces safeguarded the corrupt regimes ridding them of the only real incentive that could lead to effective political adaptation: survival. Rather than expediting victory, the U.S. strategy in each of these wars enabled protraction through a flawed system that rewarded corruption.

A Consideration for Innovation and Adaptation: the Operational Factor Space

“Information travels faster than development.”²² Future planners must recognize the importance of the information domain, and the critical role that information will have in future counterinsurgencies. As contributing editor of the MIT Technology Review John Pollock has noted, the U.S. military has determined that “information has become as important as lethal action in determining the outcome of operations.” However, he points out that, “by and large, military and intelligence organizations still see the new networks, and the cooperation and collaboration they engender, as a threat, not an opportunity.”²³ It is time to adapt, and exploit this opportunity to gain superiority across the information domain.

Counterinsurgency expert David Kilcullen predicts that the context of future wars will differ from the wars fought in Iraq and Afghanistan as a result of the convergence of four megatrends: rapid population growth, accelerating urbanization, littoralization, and increasing connectedness.²⁴ The importance of information superiority in anticipation of the security challenges that can be anticipated from these megatrends is highlighted by the proliferation of personal mobile phones and social media. Pollock further points out that, “the rapidly changing landscape of media technology, from satellite TV and cell phones to YouTube and Facebook, is adding a new dynamic to the calculus of power between the generations.”²⁵ “The world’s nodes and networks are multiplying and growing denser: a third of the world’s population is online, and 45 percent of those people are under 25. Cell-phone penetration in the developing world reached 79 percent in 2011. Cisco estimates that by 2015, more people in sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East will have mobile Internet access than have electricity at home. Across much of the world,

this new information power sits uncomfortably upon archaic layers of corrupt or inefficient governance.”²⁶

Operational planners must exploit the speed with which information is transferred in relation to governance. The establishment of institutions takes time. It takes time to identify the need for institutions, to plan them, and to implement effective ones. Insurgents have exploited this vulnerability in the past, and will continue to do so unless planners achieve information superiority. While the development of institutions may take time, information about the government’s efforts can be transferred instantly and used to secure the population’s consent of the government.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Radio-in-a-Box (RIAB) program took a positive step in executing this concept. The program, however, failed to understand how people in Afghanistan communicated and had a substantial logistical support requirement that made it difficult to execute across all of Afghanistan. What RIAB planners failed to appreciate is that while most Afghans in rural areas lacked electricity and plumbing, most men had a cell phone. Cell phone ownership, despite the absence of other utilities such as running water and electricity, must be considered and exploited during future counterinsurgencies.

Information operations must be used as part of the operational fires plan in future counterinsurgencies. Fire superiority over the enemy must be achieved over these mediums. In the cases where legitimate government is the center of gravity, planners must dominate the information domain using it to demonstrate the incentives the government is establishing to gain the willing consent of the population. Information domination can be used to inform citizens of the institutions that exist or of the adaptations that are being made. Confidence,

supported by security, will result in investment and commitment of personal financial resources. This commitment will support the establishment of a social contract between the people and the government.

Not only will effective information operations help in strengthening the relationship between the government, the people, and the military, but it will also place the enemy in a dilemma. Effective information operations across the communication mediums the population enjoy will require the enemy to either accept the counterinsurgent's fire superiority or to attempt to block the information operations by denying cell phone use or access to social media. This second, desperate measure will continue to push the insurgents into achieving control through coercion placing their cause at a disadvantage against a legitimate government that has been capable of achieving legitimacy through consent.

A Consideration for Innovation and Adaptation: the Operational Factor Force

The central challenge regarding the factor "Force" that planners will have to discern is whether U.S. forces should take on the primary role or be limited to a supporting role when confronted by future counterinsurgencies. There is a significant contrast in the outcomes between the counterinsurgencies in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan in which the U.S. military took the primary role as compared to the successful outcomes in the cases of El Salvador and Colombia where U.S. forces provided a supporting role.

While the desire for a rapid decisive victory will manifest itself in the temptation to commit robust capabilities to achieve an expedient victory, planners must resist this temptation. Instead, they must exploit the incentive of survival and allow the host nation government to gradually adapt and establish the objectives upon which a strategy can be

formed. The U.S. military should be used to support the host nation's objectives rather than position themselves as the primary provider of security.

There are many benefits to this approach. First, it reinforces ownership. It protects the host nation's incentive for survival and adaptation. It also supports unity of command and unity of effort enabling a high level of synchronization. Through a limited supporting role, planners can balance the costs associated with long-term engagement by limiting the resources expended in conflicts that have historically lasted a decade.²⁷

By recognizing the benefits of limiting American involvement to purely a supporting role, planners should reconsider the sequence of operations established by the current doctrine of "Shape-Clear-Hold-Build-Transition" (SCHBT). This sequence of tactical action has achieved tactical victories, but has failed to support a strategic victory. While effective at the tactical level, this sequence did not result in strategic victory due to the intense resources required to support the "ink-blot" model.²⁸ The governments in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan failed to provide the local government and security requirements that would support the gradual spreading of government control and secure the consent of the population. Moreover, the wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan demonstrated the tremendous cost associated with the holding phase and the additional costs required to spread the inkblot. Above all, the limited tactical success of SCHBT has yet to produce an example where this strategy has resulted in the achievement of strategic objectives.

Future operations must prioritize the building of government and security capabilities prior to the conduct of clearing operations. The necessity of establishing the capabilities prior to the execution of clearing operations was recognized in hindsight by retired General Petraeus who shared the lesson gained: "the 'hold' force should be identified before the

clearance operation begins.”²⁹ The “Government in a Box” concept executed in Afghanistan was a step in the right direction. However, the effectiveness of this concept was limited due to a lack of patience that the development of government required. While the concept was effective, the implementation was flawed as haste resulted in the selection of ineffective local political leaders. Success depends on the ability to develop the correct capability, which will continue to require tremendous tactical patience.

Planners can take a lesson from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and their operations in Mosul. While ISIL seized Mosul in 24 hours, their kinetic battle in June 2014 was preceded by a three-year campaign that prepared a shadow government that took control in the immediate aftermath of kinetic operations.³⁰ While ISIL differs in that it is willing to establish governance through coercion, their detailed preparation of all local government functions contributed to their swift control of Mosul. This example must serve as a catalyst for innovation in regards to U.S. strategy and the sequencing of tactical operations. Planners must consider building the government and security capability prior to clearing operations.

Alternate Perspectives: Counter-arguments to Consider

Victory does not require innovation or adaptation; it simply requires the proper application of existing counterinsurgency doctrine, which the U.S. failed to do in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan.³¹ Those who seek innovation and adaptation from the U.S. counterinsurgencies in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan have failed to understand that the lack of success, “is not proof that counterinsurgency doesn’t work. It is only proof that, as Galula warned, not every counterinsurgency campaign will be waged in favorable conditions.”³² The doctrine is not flawed. The U.S. execution of the doctrine was.

Moreover, the development of governance is not a task for the DoD, and continued attempts by the U.S. military to take lead in this area undermine the expertise of the Department of State (DoS). One of the key lessons from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan is that the U.S. military is ill suited for the development of government. Instead of continuing to prioritize the role of the U.S. military, the DoS should be empowered to take on the primary role in pursuit of American interests while being fully supported by the U.S. military. Military planners should limit their efforts to establishing strategies that provide security as the necessary precondition for effective governance, the consent of the population, and economic prosperity.

Rebuttal, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Victory in counterinsurgency, like in all war, comes to the side that learns and adapts the fastest.³³ War is not stagnant. Neither is doctrine. Just as the U.S. does not have the luxury of opting out of inconvenient wars, it also does not have the luxury of failing to adapt utilizing the recent lessons learned or of failing to innovate in preparation for the emerging trends that foreshadow the complexity of future conflicts.

Developing governments is not a new mission for the DoD. The U.S. military has a legacy of doing so as demonstrated in conflicts ranging from the Banana Wars of the 1930's to the post-WWII reconstruction that took place in Europe and Japan. Moreover, it is unlikely that the DoS will develop the required robust expeditionary capabilities and take the place of DoD forces in regards to government development. The DoS did not develop this capability during the U.S.'s longest war, and it is unlikely that this costly capability will be developed in the post-war fiscally austere environment.

Strategy must be built toward objectives that result in a favorable, sustainable, political solution. The COG must be capable of sustaining that political outcome in the long run. Planners must not be distracted by moral or physical forces that are capable of supporting short-lived victories, but are unable to preserve a lasting peace. This calculus of how to sustain a long-term peace must be included during the selection of potential COGs that must include the population, the military, the government, and additional moral or physical forces specific to the conflict.

Rather than assuming that the host nation government is capable of governing, planners should assume that political reform is necessary since, “insurgencies do not entirely end until the government has addressed the root causes of the conflict”.³⁴ The necessity for reform can serve as an opportunity to establish a COG that is capable of providing long-term peace. In the cases where legitimate governance is the COG then the population’s support remains of vital importance as a strategic objective. The shift in the population’s support toward either the government or toward the insurgency is the decisive point. Unlike conventional military operations, this proposed decisive point is dynamic and must be retained by the host nation government through the constant assessment of the status of the social contract. If the central government in future conflicts lacks the strength to serve as the COG, the next consideration should be whether that failing government can be transformed into the COG through the incentive of existential threats as demonstrated by the examples of El Salvador and Colombia.

The factor “Time” can be influenced through a strategy that does not remove the COG’s ultimate incentive, which is to survive. When the COG is the government, operational planners must understand that the only way to achieve a sustainable political

outcome is to support the host nation government as it reacts to failure, and it adapts searching for the proper balance between coercion and consent in order to establish a lasting social contract. This will require the U.S. military to execute supporting roles as opposed to the primary role in future counterinsurgencies. Operational planners must support host nation government's efforts to identify the proper combination of "consent and coercion" that is found in all governments.³⁵

Planners must exploit the information domain and target the population methodically utilizing personal communication devices and social media. Because information travels faster than government development, customized information operations should be executed in order to reinforce the efforts the COG is taking to safeguard incentives via the formal establishment of institutions. Planners must target the informal power holders, isolated economic leaders such as small business owners, domestic and international entrepreneurs, external investors, the population en masse, and lastly the global audience.

U.S. planners must reconsider SCHBT. Its record of strategic failure demands adaptation. Developing effective government and security capabilities as pre-conditions for clearing operations must be prioritized as requirements for the inkblot spreading of legitimate control. This will require patience across all three levels of warfare.

Continue to think, adapt, and innovate. The application of lessons learned is not enough. The application of these lessons must be combined with innovative responses that create advantages and the ability to exploit the opportunities created by emerging trends. Simply put, victory in counterinsurgency will continue to require innovation and critical analysis to properly identify the center of gravity and balance the operational factors in response to emerging security challenges.

NOTES

¹ H.R. McMaster, “Discussing the Continuities of War and the Future of Warfare: The Defense Entrepreneurs Forum,” *Small Wars Journal*, 13 October 2014, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/discussing-the-continuities-of-war-and-the-future-of-warfare-the-defense-entrepreneurs-foru>.

² Victory is being defined as a favorable sustainable political outcome. Additional information on this definition can be found in: J. Boone Bartholomees, “Theory of Victory,” *Parameters*, US Army War College Quarterly Summer 2008, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2.

³ Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), 9.

⁴ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 103.

⁵ Linda Robinson et al., *Improving Strategic Competence: Lessons from 13 Years of War* (RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2014), xv.

⁶ Linda Robinson et al., *Improving Strategic Competence: Lessons from 13 Years of War* (RAND Corporation, 2014), xvi.

⁷ Braden Civins, “A Civilian’s Comprehensive Critique of the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual...in 5-6 Pages,” *Small Wars Journal*, 5 May 2011, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/fm-3-24-coin-manual-critique>.

⁸ Braden Civins, “A Civilian’s Comprehensive Critique of the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual...in 5-6 Pages,” *Small Wars Journal*, 5 May 2011, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/fm-3-24-coin-manual-critique>.

⁹ Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Business, 2012), 3.

¹⁰ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 126.

¹¹ *Joint Publicaiton I-02. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 15 March 2015, 29.

¹² John D. Waghelstein and Dr. Donald Chisholm, “Analyzing Insurgency,” Joint Military Operations Department, Naval War College, Newport, RI February 2006, 2.

¹³ Robert G. Williams, *Export Agriculture and the Crisis in Central America* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 184-185.

¹⁴ Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Business, 2012), 42.

¹⁵ Robert G. Williams, *Export Agriculture and the Crisis in Central America* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 188-189.

¹⁶ Admiral Guillermo Barrera, “No Lost Causes” (lecture, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 3 February 2015).

¹⁷ Admiral Guillermo Barrera, “No Lost Causes” (lecture, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 3 February 2015).

¹⁸ Angel Rabasa et al., *From Insurgency to Stability Volume II: Insights from Selected Case Studies* (RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2011), 53.

¹⁹ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 14.

-
- ²⁰ Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End* (RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010), 27.
- ²¹ Christopher Paul et al., *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counter Insurgency Case Studies* (RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010), 37.
- ²² David Kilcullen, “Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla” (lecture, Talks at Google, 11 February 2015). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVUI9U4WQ6E>.
- ²³ John Pollock, “People Power 2.0: How Civilians Helped Win the Libyan Information War,” *MIT Technology Review*, 20 April 2012.
<http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/427640/people-power-20/>.
- ²⁴ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 25.
- ²⁵ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 179.
- ²⁶ John Pollock, “People Power 2.0: How Civilians Helped Win the Libyan Information War,” *MIT Technology Review*, 20 April 2012.
<http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/427640/people-power-20/>.
- ²⁷ Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End* (RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010), 27.
- ²⁸ Dr. Anand Toprani, “Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, Conventional, and Interagency Operations-The Vietnam War, 1965-1975” (seminar discussion, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 29 January 2015).
- ²⁹ Liz Sly, “Petraeus: The Islamic State Isn’t Our Biggest Problem in Iraq,” *Star and Stripes*, 20 March 2015.
- ³⁰ Haiden Mullick, “Acknowledging Strength, Targeting Weakness: A Pragmatic Strategy to Defeat ISIS” (lecture, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 25 March 2015).
- ³¹ John Ford, “Reading Galula in Afghanistan,” *War on the Rocks*, 25 February 2015,
<http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/reading-galula-in-afghanistan/>.
- ³² John Ford, “Reading Galula in Afghanistan,” *War on the Rocks*, 25 February 2015,
<http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/reading-galula-in-afghanistan/>.
- ³³ Octavian Manea, “Interview with Dr. John Nagl,” *Small Wars Journal*, 11 November 2010,
<http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/interview-with-dr-john-nagl>.
- ³⁴ Ben Connable and Martin C. Libicki, *How Insurgencies End* (RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010), 114.
- ³⁵ *FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* (Headquarters, Department of the Army, May 2014), 1-8.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York: Crown Business, 2012.

Barrera, Admiral Guillermo. “No Lost Causes.” Lecture, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 3 February 2015.

Bartholomees, J. Boone. “Theory of Victory,” *Parameters*, US Army War College Quarterly Summer 2008, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2.

Boot, Max. *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013.

Civins, Braden. “A Civilian’s Comprehensive Critique of the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual...in 5-6 Pages.” *Small Wars Journal*, 5 May 2011. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/fm-3-24-coin-manual-critique>.

Connable, Ben and Martin C. Libicki. *How Insurgencies End*. RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010.

Department of the Army. *FM 3-24/MCWP 3-33.5 Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*. May 2014.

Department of Defense. *Joint Publication 1-02. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*. 15 March 2015.

Ford, John. “Reading Galula in Afghanistan.” *War on the Rocks*, 25 February 2015. <http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/reading-galula-in-afghanistan/>.

Kilcullen, David. *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Kilcullen, David. “Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla” Lecture, Talks at Google, 11 February 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVUI9U4WQ6E>.

Manea, Octavian. “Interview with Dr. John Nagl.” *Small Wars Journal*, 11 November 2010. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/interview-with-dr-john-nagl>.

McMaster, H.R. “Discussing the Continuities of War and the Future of Warfare: The Defense Entrepreneurs Forum.” *Small Wars Journal*, 13 October 2014, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/discussing-the-continuities-of-war-and-the-future-of-warfare-the-defense-entrepreneurs-foru>.

Mullick, Haiden. “Acknowledging Strength, Targeting Weakness: A Pragmatic Strategy to Defeat ISIS.” Lecture, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 25 March 2015.

Paul, Christopher, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill. *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counter Insurgency Case Studies*. RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2010.

Patterson, Rebecca and Jodi Vittori. "Why Military Officers Should Study Political Economy," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 75, 4th Quarter 2014.

Paul, Christopher, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, Molly Dunigan. *Paths to Victory: Detailed Insurgency Case Studies*. RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2013.

Pollock, John. "People Power 2.0: How Civilians Helped Win the Libyan Information War," *MIT Technology Review*, 20 April 2012.
<http://www.technologyreview.com/featuredstory/427640/people-power-20/>.

Rabasa, Angel, John Gordon IV, Peter Chalk, Audra K. Grant, K. Scott McMahon, Stephanie Pezard, Caroline Reilly, David Ucko, S. Rebecca Zimmerman. *From Insurgency to Stability Volume II: Insights from Selected Case Studies*. RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2011.

Robinson, Linda, Paul D. Miller, John Gordon IV, Jeffrey Decker, Michael Scwhille, Raphael S. Cohen. *Improving Strategic Competence: Lessons from 13 Years of War*. RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2014.

Sly, Liz. "Petraeus: The Islamic State Isn't Our Biggest Problem in Iraq." *Star and Stripes*, 20 March 2015.

Toprani, Dr. Anand. "Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, Conventional, and Interagency Operations-The Vietnam War, 1965-1975." Seminar Discussion, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 29 January 2015.

Waghelstein, John D. and Dr. Donald Chisholm, "Analyzing Insurgency," Joint Military Operations Department, Naval War College, Newport, RI, February 2006.

Williams, Robert G. *Export Agriculture and the Crisis in Central America*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1986.